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and he says over the loudspeaker: "Today *day* ... I consider myself *self* ... the luckiest man *man* ... on the face of the earth."

MORRIE. Yeah, well, I didn't say that. Anyway, this ALS works fast. I had to stop swimming, stop driving, stop teaching. That hurt. You know me. I have to teach, or what am I here for? So I started observing my own decay, and I began to jot down ideas, aphorisms. A friend sent them to a reporter, and next thing I know, I get a phone call from Fred.

MITCH. Fred?

MORRIE. I'm always calling him "Fred." Ted! Ted Koppel! He came to the house, asks me what I thought about his show. I said, "I've only seen it twice." "Twice?" he says. "Don't feel bad, I said I've only seen *Oprah* once!"

MITCH. So what *did* you think of his show the two times you saw it?

MORRIE. I thought he was a narcissist.

MITCH. Good thing you didn't tell him *that*.

MORRIE. I did! I told him he acts like he knows the answers to all the questions BEFORE he asks them. I said, "Look, you don't know anything about dying; I do. If you're going to interview me, you better be prepared to LEARN something." Also, he has very serious hair. Anyway, we did the show, and already some good has come out of it.

MITCH. Because you're famous.

MORRIE. Because you came back.

MITCH. Yeah, hey, Morrie, I'm sorry I never ... I mean, I've lost touch with almost everyone from college: beer-drinking buddies, the first woman I ever woke up with in the morning ...

MORRIE. (*Deadpan.*) That was in college, huh?

MITCH. Well, yea —

MORRIE. (*Smiles, amused.*) Uh-huh. So, we'll catch up. Sit down. What have you been up to for sixteen years? Start at graduation.

MITCH. Well, when I left Boston, I was gonna be a jazz musician.

MORRIE. I loved that! A jazz musician

MITCH. Yeah, well, I'm not a jazz musician.

MORRIE. Oh. So ... what are you?

MITCH. I'm a journalist.

MORRIE. What do you cover, education? Science?

MITCH. No.

MORRIE. International affairs?

MITCH. Does soccer count? No, I'm ... I'm a sports reporter. A

START

columnist, actually. I also write books, do some radio, TV.  
MORRIE. Ever been on *Nightline*?  
MITCH. ... No.  
MORRIE. (*Smiles, sighs.*) Ah, well.  
MITCH. I live in Detroit. (*Beat.*) Michigan (*Beat.*) The Motor City. Ever been there?  
MORRIE. I don't think so.  
MITCH. Well I've been there a long time now. You'll be happy to know I'm more efficient than I was in college.  
MORRIE. Why will that make me happy?  
MITCH. Well, I mean, you know how kids in college slough off.  
MORRIE. When else are they gonna slough off? When they're airline pilots? Brain surgeons? Slough when you can, as long as you can! Enjoy it!  
MITCH. Well, sometimes it's hard to enjoy it. Life, I mean. Work, mortgage, "The Pace of the City, the House in the Suburbs."  
MORRIE. (*Taking Mitch back to their past.*) You still drive that Mercury Cougar?  
MITCH. (*Dumfounded; then smiles.*) ... No, I don't have the Cougar. I do have cars though.  
MORRIE. I know. You have car *keys*. So. A house, the suburbs, various cars. Have you found someone to share this life with?  
MITCH. Share...? Oh! Yes! I have! A very nice woman.  
MORRIE. (*After a beat.*) ... Have you named her?  
MITCH. (*Red-faced, quickly.*) Yes! Janine! She's a singer.  
MORRIE. Janine.  
MITCH. Yeah, she's great. We're getting married next month. We've been dating seven years.  
MORRIE. Mr. Impulsive.  
MITCH. Well, it's finding the time ... there's the hockey playoffs, the basketball playoffs. Then I'm into all these outlets, TV, radio, print. So you have to hustle to make sure you're on top —  
MORRIE. Mitch. Can I ask you a question?  
MITCH. Shoot.  
MORRIE. Are you at peace with yourself?  
MITCH. ... What is this, a ... a ... (*At a loss.*) ...?  
MORRIE. I'll ask again. Are you at peace with yourself? Are you trying to be as human as you can be?  
MITCH. (*Grappling with the question.*) Well, you know ... um ...  
MORRIE. Mitch, why are you here? / **STOP**  
MITCH. (*Taken aback.*) Well, I saw you on the show ...